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Pilcher, Margaret L.

Who's who among readers in...St. Louis Public Library

[St. Louis]

[1923]

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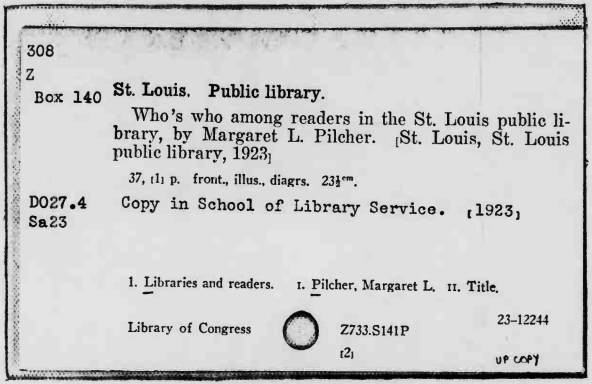

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Who's who among readers in the St. Louis public library, by Margaret L. Pilcher. [St. Louis, St. Louis public library, 1923]

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WHO'S WHO AMONG READERS

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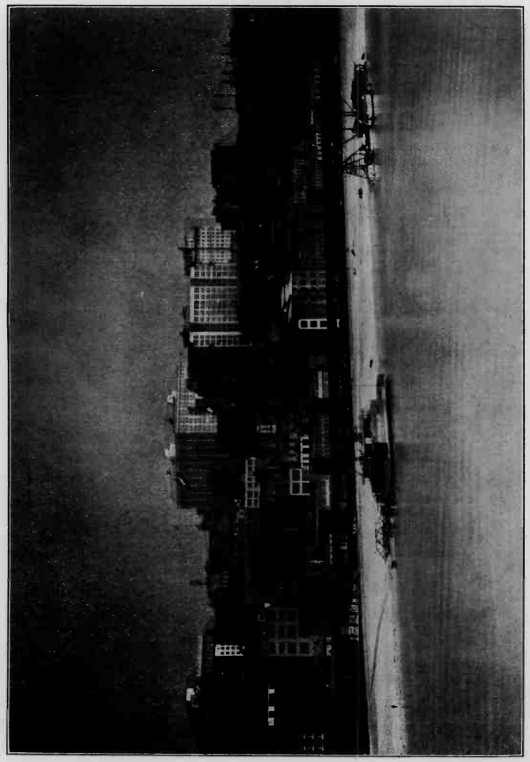


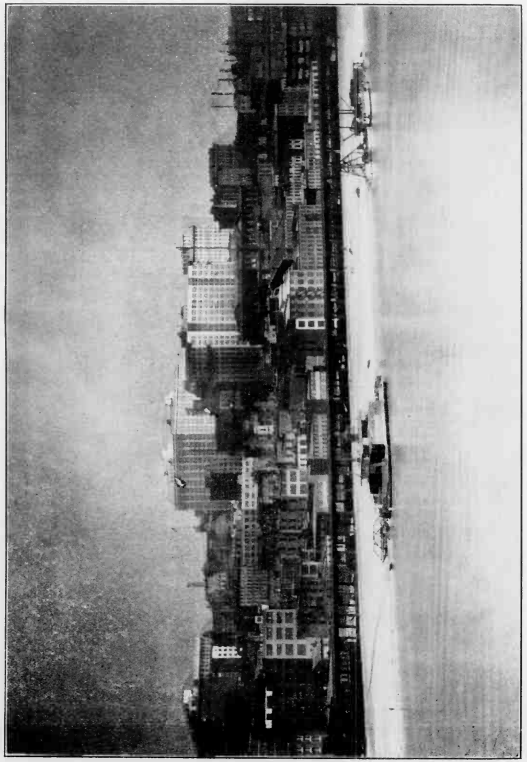
River front from Municipal Bridge

WHO'S WHO AMONG READERS

IN THE

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC
LIBRARY

BY MARGARET L. PILCHER



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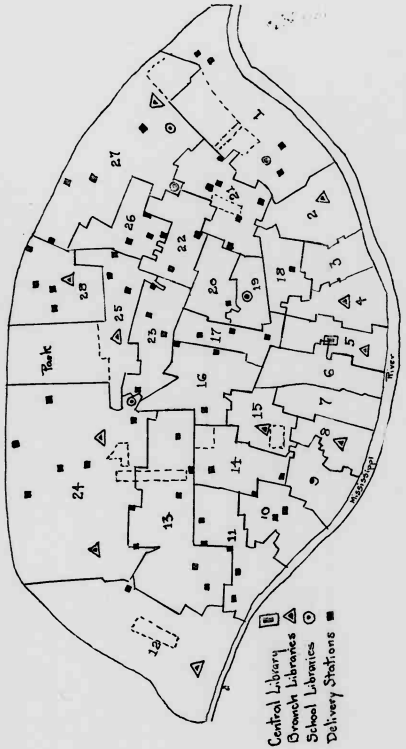


Distribution of Library Facilities in Saint Louis

JB oct 30 1923

WHO'S WHO AMONG READERS

IN

THE ST. LOUIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

BY

MARGARET L. PILCHER
First Assistant, Reference Department.

The assistant in the public library of today is only too familiar with the user who saunters in, and after making an uncertain tour of inspection through several departments and deciding to settle the business in hand, remarks by way of opening negotiations, with much the air of a man who finds comfort in having thus far eluded capture:

"Been living in this town for fifteen years, and this is the first time I've ever been in this place."

Possibly, if the assistant stopped to analyse her mental reaction, the feeling uppermost would be wonder that, with all the equipment, the zeal to service and the tireless effort to be a resource for every need of the community, that goes into the work of a modern public library, there should ever be anyone in any community who could make such a statement. And yet it happens.

Since it is part of the business of being a librarian to act, the assistant smothers a feeling of momentary discouragement and inquires whether Mr. John Doe wishes a Library card.

"Not for myself; I haven't got time for that sort of thing; but my young one is getting along now in school, and her teacher gave her a lot of questions on civics to answer. I don't see much use in giving that stuff to a little girl, but she feels so bad if she don't get a good mark in her lessons. Say, is there any book that I can buy that would help her?"

Yes, there are; and a discussion of books and prices follows.

"Why not bring the little girl to the Library, and get her a card? She will need more reference books, from now on, in her school work."

"No, we can't do that. We live 'way out near the limits. You see we only got just this one little one, and she's not real strong, so we moved out where it's a nice neighborhood and the air is good."

"There is a branch library out in your district."

"Yes, but it's too far for a little girl to be going, her mama'd worry. Besides she ought to be out playing, not stooping over a book all the time. It don't make so much difference how she does in school because her daddy can always look out for her, only she feels bad if she don't get good marks."

There is evidently anxious, loving care for one little girl, and the assistant, yielding a point, looks up the answers to the list of simple questions which some teacher has given with the sole purpose of training the child in independent work, at the same time, however, diplomatically displaying a simple textbook that looks as though it might contain the answers to similar lists of questions still in the future. The matter ends with John Doe deciding to take out a card (and the textbook) since his office is just down the street, and he can drop in and get a book now and then if the "young one" has to have it. By way of further introduction he explains that he is in the investment and loan business.

"Is that so? Do you use the 'Blank Investment Service'?"

"No, that costs a couple-hundred dollars a year, but I guess it's a good thing if a fellow can afford it."

"We have it here in the Library."

"No! Is that a fact? Why say, I didn't know the Library had that sort of thing! Where do you keep it?"

And John Doe has stepped forward out of the ranks and joined.

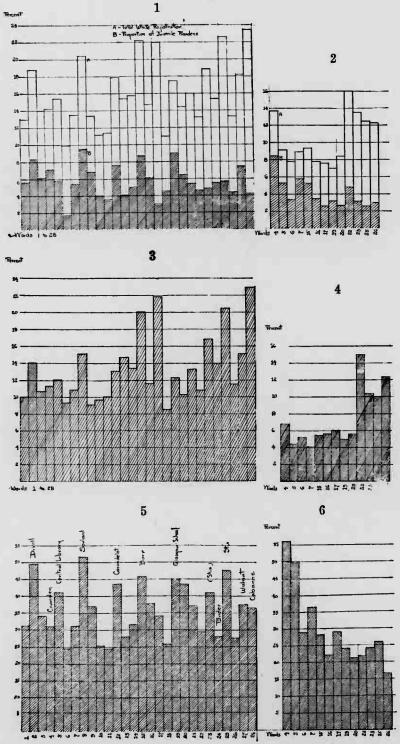
There are many others who are in his company, arranged in divisions of men, women, and children, both colored and white, in the files of registered readers of the St. Louis Public Library. They have stepped forth from rich and poor, from native and foreign, from a background of culture and education, and from the unlettered and unlearned.

Who are they, where are they, and are we doing all that we can for them with the incalculable treasure of which librarians are the custodians? More insistent comes the question, "What of the others; where are they, and why are they still outside?"

It was with the purpose of answering some such questions as these that the St. Louis Public Library undertook an investigation concerning its cardholders. Statistics and numbered files mean nothing, until they are related to some human interest. Then they take on life and meaning, because they may point to success or failure and spur on to greater activity.

The basis of the investigation was a count and distribution of readers according to the wards of the city. For this purpose an examination was made of every fourth card in the numerical registration file, a record, which has no arrangement except a chronological one, of all readers living in the city limits whose cards were in force on January 1, 1923. From this actual study of one fourth, the entire distribution of card holders in the various parts of the city was judged.

The ward boundaries in existence at the time of the 1920 census were taken because the information given in the reports of that census were used. Tables of population according to age-groups, sex and color, by wards, were secured from the Bureau of Census in order to have an accurate basis of comparison; since the registration system in the Library treats as adults all children over 14 years. Percentages of readers were figured against the population of the wards, and it was possible from the results so obtained to see what proportion of the men, women, and children of each ward of the city were library users. Other calculations were made to furnish material for comparison, chiefly as to illiteracy among negroes and whites, and percentages of



1—White Registration. Adult and Juvenile Readers Compared. A, total; B, juvenile.
2—Colored Registration. Adult and Juvenile Readers Compared. A, total; B, juvenile.
3—Registration of White Adults.
4—Registration of Colored Adults.
5—Registration of White Children. Indicating wards in which Library centers are located.
6—Registration of Colored Children. 5-14 years.

foreign population. The tabular results of this work are to be found at the end of this report.

At this point the study became less concerned with those who were cardholders than with those who were not; for the varying percentages over the city were beginning to show where to find members of the community who had not been reached. But why were they not readers? The answer was sought by a study of each ward in all the detail possible to secure. Consideration was given to the history of each as a part of the city, its character as a neighborhood, whether industrial or residential, car-service, streets, park places, conditions of housing, schools and amusement places; also its types of population, both of native stock and of transplanted citizens.

There are of course in every community some people who are like the man who did not care for a book for Christmas because he had one. There is at present the novelty of the radio, which has come within the means of most families as a source of amusement and is to be ranked alongside the automobile and the movies in its effect on reading and study. However, it must be admitted that the movies have furnished publicity to the Library by showing occasional films based upon good works of literature. There are some people who cannot read. Some do not read or speak the language of the country, but for these the Library has foreign texts, even in such language as Arabic, if they will only come to get them. There are some for whom the gaining of a livelihood so completely absorbs their energies that they are apathetic toward all except the physical conditions of existence, while more fortunate others have become epicures of the book and buy for themselves and their families the best reading matter of the day.

One cannot say that those who do not hold readers' cards are definitely in any one class. In parts of the city where study has shown that there are the greatest number of illiterates, the Library finds that the children are the readers, sometimes in greater proportion than the children in districts where almost all the people have received education. The

same predominance of child readers seems to be rather true of foreign neighborhoods. This may be due to the fact that the foreign-born are for the most part also the illiterates; or it is possible that the grown people do not become adapted quickly and as readily. It is certainly proven that the children do, as shown in the work of the branch libraries in the two most foreign neighborhoods, those of Crunden and Soulard Branches. The little cousin from Italy, frightened and bewildered, who first visits the Library in the midst of a throng of voluble relatives, in a few short weeks is able to assert the offended sensibilities of her new found American womanhood in an indignant,

"Liberry teacher! Bad boy she say me go devil!"

A little later, when the upper grades of the schools debate, they throw themselves into the fiery partizanship of the time-worn comparisons of Washington and Lincoln, the pen and the sword, and right and the presidency, with a belligerence and heat that explains much about the turmoil among small nations.

Among the foreign-born there are some groups that are difficult of approach because of their clannishness. There are some classes where habits of living and ideals leave to the women-folk very little activity outside of the home, and for whom reading would be considered a form of laziness. For the most part, however, our new citizens are very appreciative of the Library's benefits when they learn that these may be freely enjoyed. A branch library in the midst of a foreign district, which can be used without cost for neighborhood meetings and even social functions, and where there are workers who know the community and can be trusted for disinterested advice with the problems of the new life, finds a warm response.

"I asks you because you do not tell me wrong so I will act foolish when I don't know" is the appreciation that came from one unfamiliar with our ideas of good form. Quite a few of the foreign-born find their way to Library membership when they seek naturalization and must post themselves upon American affairs.

Generally speaking, three times as many children are reading as either women or men, and the average number of women using the Library is slightly greater than the number of men. The actual figures for Library use by white readers show an average of 13.2 per cent. of the total population for men, 14.7 per cent. for women, and 35.7 per cent. for children between 5 and 14 years. Among colored readers the average for men, considered for representative colored districts, is 5.8 per cent., for women 8.4 per cent., and for children 28.7 per cent.

Adult readers are found in the immediate vicinity of Library centers, with a tendency toward greater numbers where those neighborhoods are of comfortable, well-kept homes, of churches, and of better-class amusements. Both men and women are registered in greater numbers in the west end, although one should remember in this connection that there are at present better Library facilities for this part of the city than for either the north or south sides. The influence of women's clubs is shown in the Stix, Cabanne and Carondelet Branch districts.

On the other hand, greater numbers of children in the east end of the city, among the poorer districts, hold Library cards, possibly because these children are seldom able to have any books of their own. It should be borne in mind that throughout this report the study of children's reading is based upon the numbers of card-holders between the ages of 5 and 14 years.

Child readers are invariably found wherever there is a branch or school library, and the great mass of children not yet reached are undoubtedly the ones who live too far from any Library center to make the trip to and fro. In order to judge somewhat of the effect of distance, a special study was made of the registration of children in the 12th ward, a district remote from any save the influences of the Buder and Carondelet Branches. A sparsely-settled area between the two portions of the ward in which these libraries are located makes the influence of each more sharply defined. It was found that all but 15.3 per cent. of the

child readers were living within 15 blocks around one or other of the two centers. The Carondelet Branch district was further divided into zones with the Library as a center, and the results were as follows:

Zone I, (within 5 blocks) 582 readers	22.4 per cent
Zone II, (5 to 10 blocks) 650 readers	25.3 per cent
Zone III, (10 to 15 blocks) 526 readers	20.4 per cent
Buder District, 414 readers (within 15 blocks)	16.1 per cent
Outside the 15 block zones of both branches, 394 readers	15.3 per cent

Children read, if they have the opportunity, whatever the background of the home may be. Their active minds, filled with curiosity about the whole vast interesting world yet to be learned of, seize upon books and find both fact and the unreality of fable equally of value. The small boy whose mother discovered in him at the age of eight, a superstitious awe for all black cats as possible princesses in disguise, directed his reading along another line and found him a small compendium of tales of Scottish history at nine.

Workers with problems of child delinquency testify frequently to the value of creating a "Library habit" as an aid in socializing the child, and in replacing the gang instinct with the ethical ideas of good citizenship. A Juvenile Court worker recently ordered that a certain child living in the neighborhood of the Central Library should be kept home at night, but altered the order when it was found that the child was spending the evening hours in the Library. Later the worker visited several departments and discussed the particular needs of the case with Library assistants who had been instrumental in interesting the child in wholesome pastimes. It would be difficult to obtain a really just estimate of delinquency and the possible good influence of the Library, because among children of somewhat better classes such cases are settled out of court, and do not come to the notice of the social case worker.

Among the older children the influence of the present methods of teaching in the public schools is clearly noticeable in their relations to the Library. The educational ideal which gives the child a topic and sends him to look for his

data through the use of several texts, makes it less possible for lessons to be learned in the old rote fashion, or to be worked out by an older person in the home, and not only brings the child a more colorful and lasting impression but creates a habit of dependence upon the Library. Children quickly develop a good sense of how to get at the information in books and are less daunted by indexes and catalogs than many grown-ups. One odd child amused the assistants at the Central Library by her entirely independent methods of studying art. She knew what she wanted and called for it from the catalogue; and then settled down with her color-box to copy. A very small boy asked for "something about the Erie Canal," but when the assistant in the Reference Department, judging him by his immature appearance, started for an encyclopedia, the boy at her heels spoke:

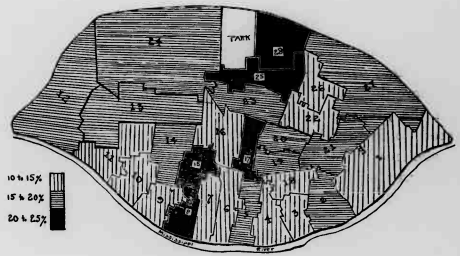
"Are you going to look in the Americana? I looked there, but it doesn't have what I want. I want to know what all the people said and thought about that Canal when it was first opened."

It is possible that a useful study could be made of the inter-relation of the Library and the public schools, if statistics of school children by wards were available. No exact comparison could be made unless such figures showed age-groups of children also, but the idea held such interesting possibilities that it was decided to make the comparison in this report for several widely-varying districts of the city. The numbers of children in public schools of the 1st, 8th and 28th wards were compiled from the records of the Board of Education showing statistics of pupils by city-blocks. The 1st ward represents a district with not very adequate Library service, the 8th and 28th are districts well-served but widely different in character. The 8th is a poor neighborhood of foreign-born, while the 28th is a district with a small foreign element and excellent economic conditions. Judging these pupils to be children between 5 and 14 years of age, it is found that in the 1st ward 54.8 per cent. are in public schools; in the 8th ward 63.4 per cent., while

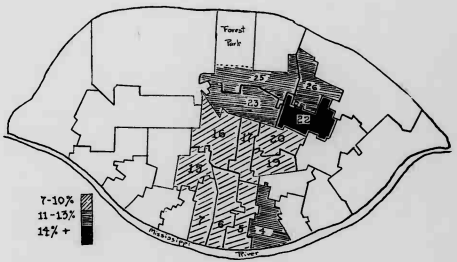
in the 28th ward only 51.7 per cent. In spite of lack of adequate facilities, the 1st ward is almost average in Library use by children, the 8th reaches the highest point of any ward in this respect, while the 28th, with the best of facilities, is only slightly better than the 1st ward in its showing.

In St. Louis whites and colored use the same libraries, although they are segregated in the schools. In order to judge negro readers fairly, they were studied only in the wards where they are living in sufficient numbers to consider the neighborhood a colored one. Some interesting facts came to light. Negro children, like the whites, are found in greatest numbers as readers where they are living near a Library center, but in one or two instances where many white children use the Library it was found that the negro children were not doing so, owing to the fact that the Library branch was in a white school and therefore not accessible to the colored children. There are fewer children registered in the better colored neighborhoods, but this would seem to be due to the fact that they are at a considerable distance from the Library center which they may use.

Negroes are found in greatest numbers in a strip through the center of the city that extends rather solidly west to Vandeventer Avenue. The better class, those among whom illiteracy is less and economic circumstances better, live west of Grand Boulevard, and it is among this population that there seems to be the most appreciation of the Library on the part of adults. A very good percentage of women there are library users, which points rather definitely to the activities of several clubs among colored women that are doing earnest work in their progress of study. A slight, but interesting side-light is the use of a fine old collection of books of doctrinal theology, sermons, and church history left to the Reference Department by clergymen. The sermons of Moody, Spurgeon, Talmage, Brooks and other splendid religious leaders of a generation gone-by, have for years been brought from the shelves at requests that have come almost entirely from colored men.



Ratio of Readers to Total White Population



Percentage of Colored Readers
in
Wards having more than 5% colored population

The work of the Sumner High School, the only one for colored pupils, has been noticeable at the Central Library. Teachers of courses in English, civics and other subjects have asked that bibliographies be prepared for their classes, or that collections on certain topics be reserved for student use. One year the entire senior class used the library to prepare themes in a competition for the honor of appearing on the program at graduation. Young colored students seem to find the Library a convenient place for study, and make free use of the reading rooms and of the pens and ink furnished in the public writing-room.

Since the chief element of this survey has been a study of the social geography of the city, it is the purpose here to include some of the interesting material that has been assembled by wards as an indication of the character of work which the Library is doing in various parts of the city, and of the conditions under which the work is done. In some instances, where several wards naturally form a small community, these are grouped. Some statistics are introduced, but the bulk of statistical data is to be found in the tables at the conclusion. The average of foreign population referred to below, is approximately 14.6 per cent., while that of illiteracy is about 2 for the white population and 8 for the colored.

FIRST WARD

This is a district of considerable size lying along the river in the extreme northern part of the city. There are some large industries along the levee, but back from the river are good residential streets, particularly at the extreme north end just inside the city limits. Only a small southern corner of the ward is compactly settled. It is an inaccessible neighborhood, having only one car-line which makes the trip from the downtown center consume at least an hour.

The population is chiefly native white of native parentage. Among the foreign-born, Germans, Austrians and Hungarians are in greatest numbers, with a sprinkling of English and Irish.

The Library has four stations where books are called for and delivered, and a school library in the Bates School which has drawn children to Library usage, as shown by the fact that about half of the card-holders in the ward are children under 14 years. However, most of the children of the ward are outside this school district, and there is no library center near enough to be convenient for most of the adults, whose work is probably in the industrial plants. Hence, Library users are not present in the numbers that could be desired. Most of the Library use is probably in the neighborhood which borders on the Second Ward where the Divoll Branch Library is located.

SECOND WARD

The Second is a small ward lying south of the First, and altogether more accessible and better populated. Along the river it is solidly industrial, but the western half is a residential district where about two-thirds of the people are of foreign parentage and the foreign-born are chiefly Austrian, Hungarian and German.

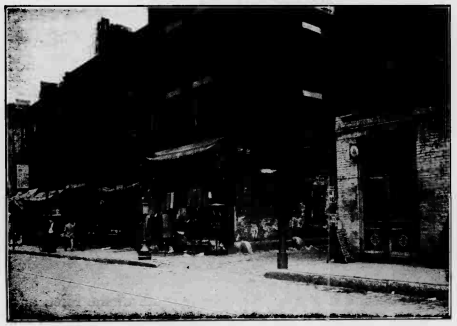
The Divoll Branch, which is very active, particularly in work with the schools, is nearly in the center of the ward. The percentage of child readers is the second highest in the city, and about a seventh of the men and women are also using the Library.

THIRD, FOURTH AND EIGHTEENTH WARDS

These wards together form what is one of the two most densely-populated districts of the city. They form a territory from 12 to 29 blocks north of the center of the city, and west from the river to Jefferson Avenue.

This is an old part of St. Louis, once residential, but now given over to industries along the river front, and, farther west, to a neighborhood of unattractive, dingy, narrow

streets, smoke-stained old houses and the shabby small stores of a Ghetto district. Some years ago it was a distinctly Irish



4th Ward, Sixth Street and Franklin Avenue

neighborhood known familiarly as "Kerry Patch," but much of this character has passed, although Irish still form about an eighth of the population of the 18th ward. Russian and Polish Jews have come in large groups, and the greatest numbers of foreign-born are found here as well as the most illiterates. In the 4th ward there are also numbers of negroes, about one-seventh of whom are illiterate. This is one of the worst districts of housing in the city, there being somewhat less than half as many dwellings as families.

The Crunden Branch is in the 4th ward, and serves all three. A high proportion of the readers found here are children, colored being registered in relatively greater numbers than white. The next numerous class of readers are white men. However, the district falls below what has been found to be the average of readers for the city at large, owing doubtless to the foreign-born, to illiteracy and to the pressure of economic conditions.

FIFTH AND SIXTH WARDS

These wards lie in the heart of the downtown district, extending about eight blocks north and south of Olive Street, and from the river west to Jefferson Avenue. As far west as Twelfth Street both wards are given strictly to business, office buildings, commission houses, factories and department stores, so that the resident population is crowded into a congested tenement and rooming-house neighborhood of a most unattractive type.

The city administrative group of buildings lies about midway of the 6th ward, and the Union Station is near its western end. The main Library lies on the boundary between the two wards and serves both. The character of these wards and of their population will undoubtedly be radically changed when the action provided for in the recent bond-issue has removed many of the ramshackle and unsightly buildings and created a civic group and plaza. At present, the population is almost half negro, and the remaining white are about one-third foreign-born, of Austrian, Italian, Greek and German origin. Illiteracy is high both among negroes and whites.

There is somewhat greater response to the Library here among colored than among white residents, when allowance is made for the higher negro illiteracy. In the 5th ward many children are registered and they form about one-half of the readers, but in the 6th ward there are proportionately fewer. There are actually fewer women and children living in the 6th ward than in any other part of the city.

The fact that the Central Library with its large collection does not draw more readers from its own vicinity is probably due to the character of the neighborhood. Market Street is lined with cheap places of amusement and has an atmosphere calculated to resist the appeal of the Library. Probably if the experience of schools and churches could be taken, it would be found that it parallels that of the Library in the general apathy evidenced in this district.

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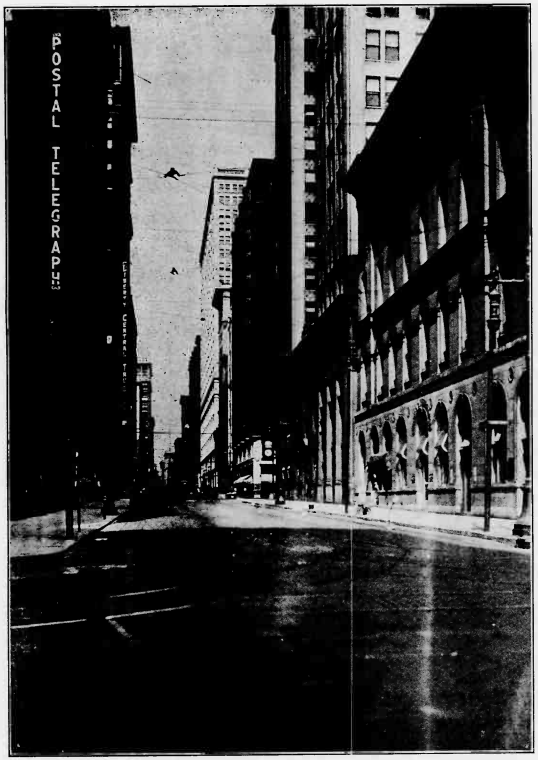
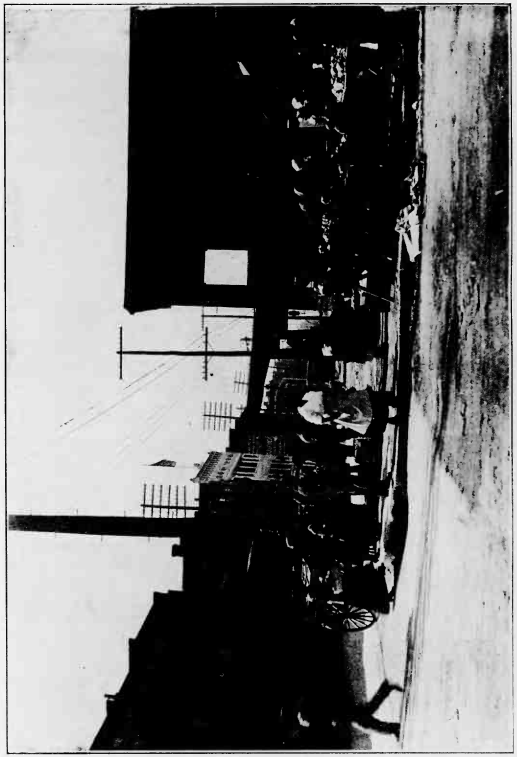
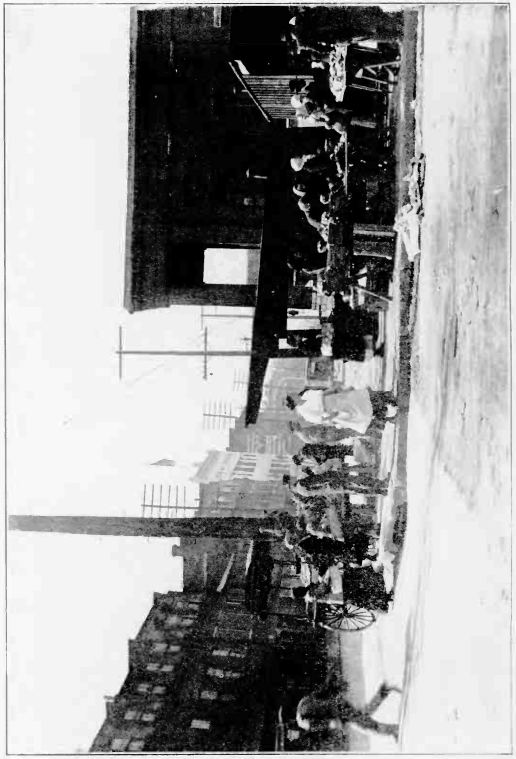


5th Ward, Olive Street, west from Fourth Street



8th Ward, Soulard Market on 7th and Carroll Streets

5th Ward, Olive Street, west from Fourth Street



8th Ward, Soulard Market on 7th and Carroll Streets

SEVENTH, EIGHTH AND NINTH WARDS

These three wards are grouped because they form the neighborhood from which the Soulard Branch draws its patronage. They constitute the second densely populated part of the city. The extent is about a mile along the river front south from the Mill Creek Valley, and west to 18th Street. This is also the second of the large foreign settlements, and has groups of Germans, Austro-Hungarians, Russians, Syrians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Jugoslavs and Roumanians, forming about one-fifth of the total residents of the three wards. About half of the native population is of foreign or mixed parentage. The 7th ward has in addition a large number of negroes.

This is a neighborhood that was once the finest residential area, and many of the old houses are still standing; but it is now densely settled by a hard-working population in poor or only moderate circumstances. Along the line of the railroads and on the river front there are manufacturing plants on railroad-spurs. Shoe, paint, clothing, sheet-metal, staple food products, milling and wood-working plants are among the industries.

Soulard Branch lies in the 8th or central ward of the three, and in the small neighborhood of its ward has a most cordial response through its friendly atmosphere, which has brought into its sphere much community life. All classes of readers are present in more than the average percents in the 8th ward, and the influence of two large schools, the Pestalozzi and Lafayette, is shown in the Library use by the children, which is the highest in the city. In the 7th and 9th wards readers are present in much less than the average proportions. It is peculiar that in such a small compass conditions should vary so greatly. There must be present racial or group influences which might be apparent on closer study.

TENTH, ELEVENTH AND THIRTEENTH WARDS

These wards are in the southern half of the city, the 10th and 11th lying between the river and Grand Boulevard,

while the 13th stretches in a long irregular rectangle north and south with Grand Boulevard as its eastern boundary. Except for a narrow strip of industries along the river, it is an established residential neighborhood, the older portions in the east ends, the newer, farther west. Grand Boulevard is the main artery of travel from the south side to the center of the city, and is given over to small commercial buildings. A block off this street the neighborhood assumes its quiet, home character.

Foreign-born are in about average numbers, and are principally German, Austrian and Swiss, but the native-born are largely of German extraction, since the migration of 1848 and 1870 made this part of the city pre-eminently German. There are also some Irish.

This is a neighborhood of people in comfortable or very good circumstances, and it shows some interest and response toward community activities, appearing in the purely local business and improvement associations. There is hardly another part of the city where the opening of a new bank would be the occasion for a street dance, and South Grand Boulevard was the scene of a unique neighborhood demonstration at the Christmas season. Gaily-decorated trees lined the side-walk for about six blocks, and showed their colored lights during the evening. They were the donation of local business men.

This district needs a branch library. It is not readily accessible to any Library center, and although served by subbranches still does not show the desired number of library users in proportion to its residents. There is little doubt that a Library center would be taken into and made a part of the life of the "South-Side."

TWELFTH WARD

This is one of the largest in the city, lying in the southern part and extending westward 4 or 5 miles in a triangle about two miles wide along the river front. For about 12 blocks west from the river it is a well-settled residential district. About midway of its westward extent, for some blocks on

12th Ward, South Broadway and Fillmore Street

either side of Gravois Road, which crosses from north to south, there is a recently-developed section. The rest of the ward is a semi-suburban community of truck-farms.

The settlement at the eastern end of the ward constitutes what was once the town of Carondelet and the earlier settlement of "Vide Poche," the little French village which lay on the line of travel between the forts at Kaskaskia, and St. Charles on the Missouri River. A flourishing town, even before the neighboring village of St. Louis, it was destined by the growth of the latter to be taken into its limits, but still preserves the designation of "Carondelet" and its somewhat individual character.

Originally French and Spanish in population, today its native-born are descendants of many of these old families. To these were added a German element in the migrations of a generation ago, and today it has received new citizens from the Germanic and Slavic countries, with a few from Italy and Ireland.

Lying in about the center of the ward is the Carondelet Branch, which has long been in active co-operation with its

community. The response to the Library is shown in the very good proportion of Library users among its population. Larger groups of women and children are readers than men. The activity of the Blow and Carondelet schools and the work of a large woman's club are probably responsible.

THIRTEENTH WARD

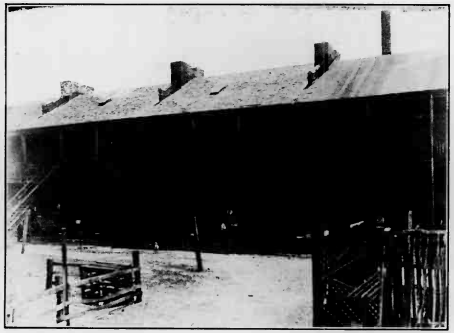
(Included with the 10th and 11th wards)

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH WARDS

These wards constitute the district of the Barr Branch Library. They lie south of the Mill Creek Valley, and between 18th Street and Grand Boulevard. In the low ground near the valley there has been a gradual influx of negroes, and the whole eastern extent of the 15th ward has been deteriorating for some years. The fact that it has lasted as well as it has is probably due to the Lafayette Park area and the fine old mansions that remain, many of them now boarding-houses. From about midway of the wards west to Grand Boulevard, in what is known as the Compton Heights region, the neighborhood is one of pleasant homes, with several streets of fine residences.

The population is largely of native parentage, and the number of foreign-born is less than the general average for the city, being German, Austrian, Czechoslovak and Hungarian, with some Irish and English. The general standards of population are good.

The Barr Branch Library is in the 15th ward but is accessible to all parts of both. Its influence is readily seen in the proportion of readers, which is about 17.8 per cent. of the ward population. Children are the largest reading group in these wards, and women are the next most numerous. Only about one-tenth of the colored population of the 15th ward are library users, possibly because they are more or less grouped in the district least accessible to Barr Branch.



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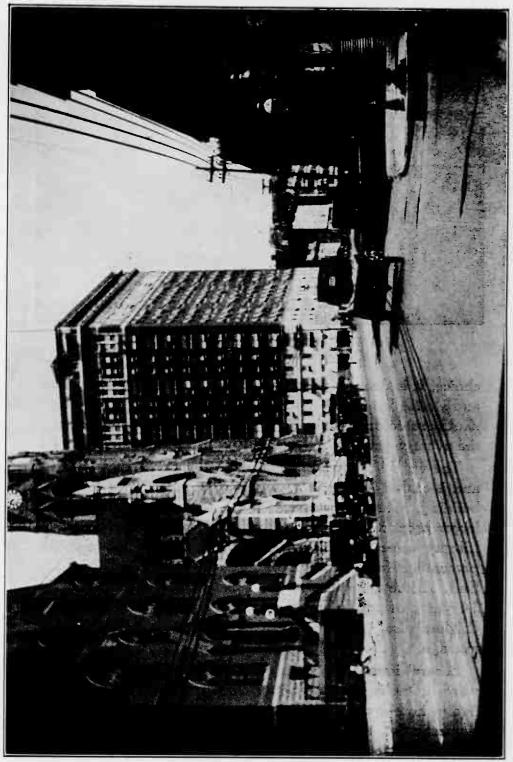
SIXTEENTH WARD

This ward does not readily lend itself to any grouping, although part of it comes within the influence of the Barr Branch, while the remainder is more nearly allied to the Central Library. It extends from Jefferson Avenue to Vandeventer, and is cut through the center by the Mill Creek Valley, a natural depression once occupied by Chouteau Pond and by a stream now diverted to a sewer. This area has been utilized for railroad yards throughout its length and is marked by a line of industries which have sought shipping-facilities. The white residential area lies south of the valley, in the neighborhood borderng the 14th, 15th and 13th wards, while negroes, who form half of the population, are settled in a densely populated section on the north side, and between Jefferson Avenue and Grand Boulevard. In the western end the valley broadens, and there is a low unimproved area with few and poor residences, and industries such as packing-houses, glue works, and tobacco factories.

There are not many foreign-born, the chief groups being German and Irish. Illiteracy is not high for either negroes or whites. The white residential district is accessible to Barr Branch, but all classes of readers except white children are present in proportions that are less than the average. White women make a relatively larger group of readers than men, but the reverse is true of the colored people.

SEVENTEENTH WARD

The 17th ward extends from 23rd Street west to Vandeventer Avenue in a narrow strip several blocks either side of Olive Street. It is largely a region of narrow old houses set close together, and of small-type business-buildings which are rapidly turning it into a commercial district. Near Grand Boulevard, and in the few blocks west to the ward boundary, there are several large hotels, the St. Louis University,



17th Ward, Grand Boulevard, north from near Lindell

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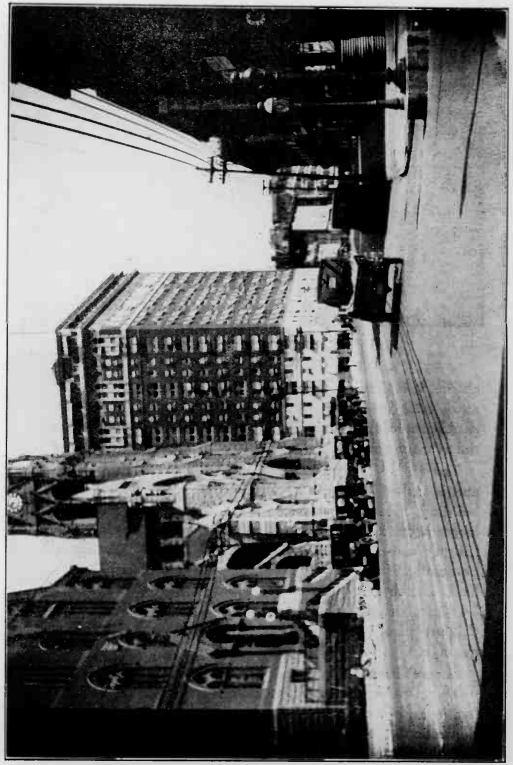

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the University Club, buildings occupied by the offices of physicians, and dwellings used as boarding-houses.

A very good class of residents is in this western portion, but east of Grand Boulevard, where the neighborhood is less

17th Ward, east from Metropolitan Building, Grand Boulevard and Olive Street

choice, it is densely populated with different types, negroes and whites living side by side. More than half of the residents are colored, and the foreign-born, who are in about the average proportion, are Russian, Irish and German.

The ward lies directly west of the Central Library district, and is served by the Olive Street cars, which pass the main building. Registration here shows a peculiar tendency. A larger proportion of the white men living in this district are Library users than in any other part of the city, and the percentage for women is almost as great as in the West End. More than four-fifths of the white readers are over 14 years of age, although there is a good proportion for children also. All classes of negro readers fall below the average.

Several interesting ideas offer themselves concerning this ward. One is, that the better class of people resident here live in hotels, clubs and boarding-houses and, having fewer domestic ties, turn to the Library. Another theory is, that, with the Olive Street cars carrying the workers from the district past the Library, there is a daily renewal of its appeal.

EIGHTEENTH WARD

(Included with third and fourth wards.)

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH WARDS

These cover a district north of the center of the city, between Jefferson and Vandeventer Avenues. The eastern portion is a congested region of old houses and stores, and shabby narrow streets of the Ghetto, but the western portion near Grand Boulevard is somewhat better, although it also has passed its best days. Negroes are moving in rapidly.

The population of these wards is already about one-tenth colored. In the 19th ward, which is the more eastern of the two, about a fourth of the white population is foreign-born, half of the group being of Russian-Jewish origin while the remainder is Irish, German, Polish, Roumanian and Italian. More than half the residents of native origin are of foreign or mixed parentage. There are fewer foreign-born in the 20th ward, chiefly Irish, and the proportion of native stock is larger. Illiteracy is much higher in the eastern half than in the western among white residents, and relatively low in all portions for negroes.

The Crunden Branch lies in the district immediately east of this, and there is a school library in the Glasgow School, near the dividing line between the two wards. There is an excellent response to the Library among children, who are about half of the readers. The proportions of men and women readers are lower than the average, being about 12 per cent. in the 19th ward and 10 per cent. in the 20th.

There is not as good a response on the part of colored residents in the 19th ward as there is in the 20th. In the latter there is a tendency toward a greater proportion of adult readers, possibly because the Glasgow School library is in a white school. The fact that there is a tendency for colored readers to reach a larger proportion of the population indicates a better class of colored residents, who would probably appreciate a more general Library service.

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TWENTY-FIRST WARD

This is an area in the north-eastern part of the city directly west of the 1st and 2nd wards. It is a residential section, partly of an established character, but in the neighborhood of O'Fallon Park and of Bellefontaine and Calvary Cemeteries, of a newer, more modern type of comfortable homes on attractive streets. The population is largely of several generations of American stock, and the foreign-born are chiefly German.

The eastern section comes within the sphere of the Divoll Branch, while the Ashland School on the western boundary houses a school library that has a large patronage. Children form the largest group of readers, with men second. This part of the city is comparable with the south side neighborhoods, but does not make quite as good a showing in point of readers. The actual proportions here are 13.5 per cent. of men, 13.3 of women, and 35.8 of the children.

TWENTY-SECOND AND TWENTY-SIXTH WARDS

These cover a territory north of Page Boulevard, between Vandeventer Avenue and Kingshighway. The 22nd is the eastern and has the larger colored population. It is also an older residential section that is no longer choice, but the neighborhood grows better in the 26th ward.

The population is chiefly of native stock. The foreign-born are somewhat more than a tenth, and are chiefly Irish, German and Russian-Jewish. About a fifth of the residents of the 22nd Ward are colored, and a tenth of those of the 26th, this element being of the better class.

There are no good Library facilities, although a few children are in the district of the Ashland School, and the western part of the neighborhood is accessible to the Cabanne Branch. About one-tenth of the adults are Library users and about one-fourth of the children. Better response is shown among colored adults than in any other part of the

city. About one-eighth hold Library membership and of this group women predominate. Adults make up three-fourths of the colored readers, probably because there are no near facilities for the children. It is to be considered that relatively the colored population is making a better response to the Library than the white, since facilities are about the same for both.

TWENTY-THIRD AND TWENTY-FIFTH WARDS

These wards take in the territory from the Mill Creek Valley north to Page Boulevard, and from Vandeventer Avenue west to Kingshighway, the 23rd lying in the eastern half, while the 25th borders on Forest Park. Both wards have a section in the low-lying Mill Creek Valley which is rather densely settled and is a poorer, less attractive neighborhood, where the foreign-born who have employment in the packing-houses are found. A narrow strip in the northwestern part of the wards has been taken over by colored residents, but the rest of the district is a good neighborhood of well-kept homes, and of many churches, with fine apartment hotels overlooking Forest Park.

The population is predominantly of native parentage. The foreign-born who inhabit the southern section are about one-tenth of the total residents, and are German, Irish, Russian and Hungarian. There are Scotch, English and Canadians in the 25th Ward.

The Adams School library serves the southern section, the Stix Branch lies very near the center, and the Cabanne Branch is accessible to the northwestern portion. This is a favorable section from the standpoint of Library use. About half of the children are users, and about a fifth of the adults. There are fewer children in the district than in some of the other parts of the city, and they are proportionately only about one-fourth of the total number of white readers. There is a good response on the part of the colored population also, about a tenth of the adults holding Library membership and a fourth of the children.

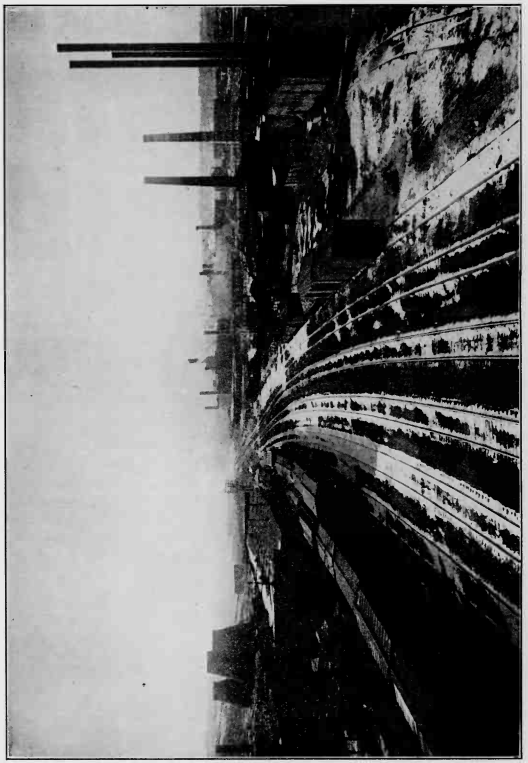
TWENTY-FOURTH WARD

This takes in the entire western extent of the city south of Forest Park, from Kingshighway to the city limits. There are clay mines in the region south of the park, and an industrial section of brick-kilns, plants for the manufacture of clay products, iron and steel works and rolling-mills, which draw their workers from a populous settlement on the crest of a ridge south of the Mill Creek Valley. There is a triangular district in the northwestern corner between Forest Park and the city limits that is well settled, and in the extreme southern part of the ward a compact, very new residential district known as Southampton. With the exception of these portions, which have fairly good car-service, the ward is sparsely settled, with large semi-suburban areas with no car lines, where most residents use the suburban accommodation trains.

About half of the population are of foreign or mixed parentage. Italians are the largest element of the foreign-born, living in a compact group in the section near the railroads known as "Dago Hill."

24th Ward, Hereford Avenue ("Dago Hill")

There are two library centers, the Buder Branch in Southampton, opened in March 1922, which immediately became



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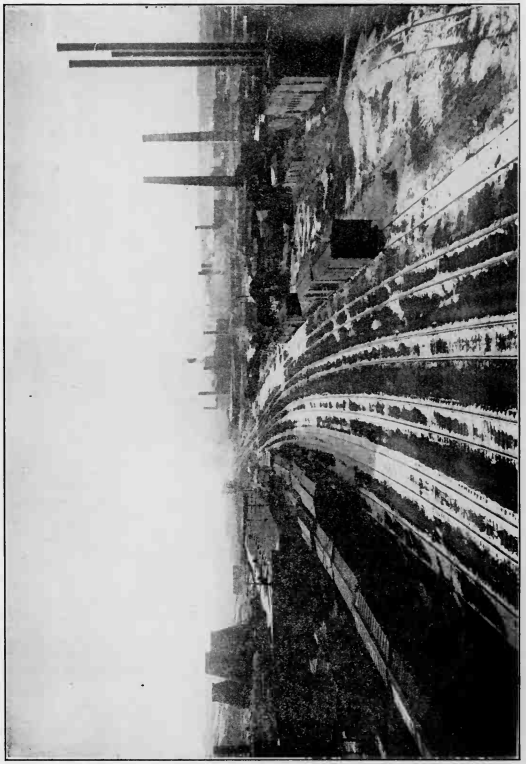

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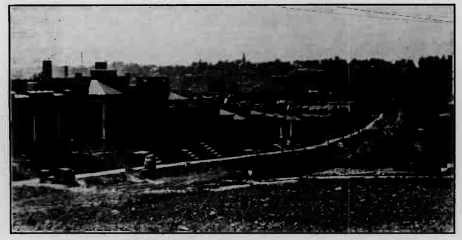
very active in its community, and the Fairmount Sub-branch in the Italian section. Owing to distance and isolation most of the Library users are in these two sections. The large region near McCausland Avenue and the Clayton Road has only delivery stations, and it is probable that a new branch here could find an active response toward Library membership. At present about a tenth of the grown people are readers and a fourth of the children. The Roe School has a room, intended for a branch, which may be opened shortly.



24th Ward, Tholozan Street, west of Gravois Road

TWENTY-SIXTH WARD

(See 22nd and 26th wards)

TWENTY-SEVENTH WARD

A large district north of Page Boulevard, taking in the entire northwestern extent of the city between Kingshighway and the city limits. Near the line of the 28th Ward it is a fairly populous older region, but with the exception of Walnut Park, a rather well-settled area near the cemeteries, the rest of the ward is sparsely settled and newly residential. A recently-developed, large industrial district is growing up in the northwest, and it is probable that neighborhood

growth will be more rapid. At present large areas are inaccessible to car lines.

The native population is almost half of foreign or mixed parentage. The foreign element numbers about an eighth of the total residents and is chiefly Russian, Jewish and Irish in the older sections, with English, Italian, German and Slavic groups in the newer.

The southern portion of the ward is accessible to Cabanne Branch. The Walnut Park Branch in the midst of its district finds an active response on the part of readers, and there are school libraries in the Ashland and Mark Twain Schools which have drawn many children to the use of books. Almost half of the Library users in the ward are children. At present about a sixth of the adults and a third of the children living in the ward are reading.

TWENTY-EIGHTH WARD

This ward takes in the territory north of Forest Park between Kingshighway and the western city limits. The finest residential areas in the city are here, and it is notably the district of greatest wealth. The section is one of homes of people in very good circumstances. There are many apartment-houses, good schools and large churches.

28th Ward, Kingsbury Place

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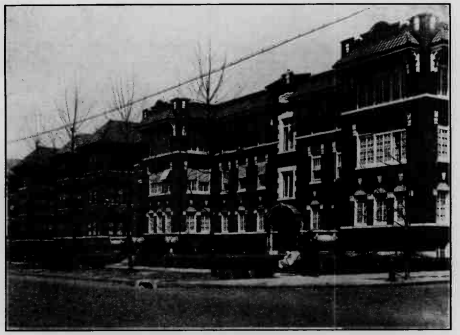
28th Ward, Kingsbury Place

The population is predominantly of native parentage. Foreign-born are less than one-tenth of the whole and chiefly German, Irish and Russian with some English and Canadians. Illiteracy is the lowest in the city.

The Cabanne Branch serves the neighborhood and has a splendid response. Approximately one-fourth of the women residents hold Library membership, and one-fifth of the men. This is the highest proportion of women readers in the city, and points to the work of active clubs in the West End. Adults make up about four-fifths of the readers. There are fewer children in the west end than in parts of the north and south sides, but of those in the 28th ward about a third have become users of the Library.



28th Ward, Clara Avenue, near Delmar Boulevard

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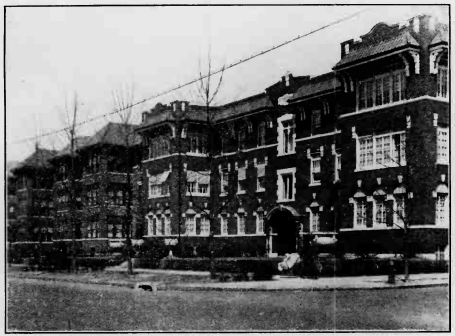

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STATISTICS OF WHITE READERS

Ward	TOTAL WHITE			ADULT							JUVENILE, 5 TO 14 YEARS			
				MEN			WOMEN							
	Population	Registration	% Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Reg.	% Total Adult Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Regist.	Juvenile Proportion of Total Regist.
1	24,411	3,208	13.10	9,005	824	9.15	8,857	972	10.98	10.06	4,549	1,412	31.05	44.0
2	20,260	3,864	19.05	7,620	1,008	13.13	7,422	1,104	14.89	14.04	3,536	1,752	49.60	45.3
3	20,052	2,804	13.93	7,422	796	10.72	7,378	784	10.61	10.67	3,588	1,224	34.10	43 6
4	24,529	3,528	14.30	8,459	940	11.10	7,240	844	11.65	11.35	5,627	1,744	31.00	48.9
5	14,586	2,244	15.42	7,450	772	10.38	4,088	632	15.44	12.16	2,045	840	41.05	37.4
6	8,837	880	9.96	6,309	556	8.82	1,735	196	11.30	9.34	324	128	24.45	15.0
7	15,474	2,088	13.50	6,295	540	8.59	5,369	736	13.70	10.93	2,604	812	31.19	39.4
8	20,201	4,156	20.60	7,541	1,084	14.39	7,190	1,144	15.92	15.12	3,729	1,928	51.70	46.4
9	21,577	2,908	13.49	7,862	832	10.58	7,742	596	7.71	9.14	3,980	1,480	37.19	50.9
10	20,394	2,360	11.58	7,648	852	11.12	7,951	680	8.55	9.74	3,267	828	25.32	35.1
11	28,731	3,288	11.45	10,916	1,176	10.75	11,602	1,088	9.38	10.05	4,146	1,024	24.70	31.2
12	30,143	5,388	17.87	10,766	1,172	10.90	10,842	1,648	15.20	13.05	5,845	2,568	43.95	42.9
13	48,170	7,536	15.62	16,953	2,404	14.19	20,446	3,116	15.23	14.75	7,169	2,016	28.12	29.7
14	27,507	4,356	15.85	10,086	1,320	13.19	11,736	1,616	13.78	13.45	3,873	1,420	36.68	32.6
15	21,438	4,768	22.20	9,155	1,584	17.30	8,680	1,788	20.60	18.95	3,053	1,396	45.70	29.3
16	12,184	1,788	14.69	4,595	448	9.78	4,677	616	13.15	11.47	1,918	724	37.75	40.5
17	12,163	2,676	22.00	5,928	1,332	22.50	4,587	964	21.00	21.83	1,105	380	34.40	14.2
18	20,388	2,196	10.78	7,197	588	8.18	7,850	684	8.72	8.45	3,593	924	25.70	42.0
19	18,440	3,276	17.76	6,504	828	12.72	6,570	784	11.92	12.32	3,680	1,664	45.25	50.8
20	22,545	3,284	14.58	8,607	944	10.96	9,037	884	9.79	10.36	3,350	1,456	43.62	44.4
21	30,637	4,932	16.08	11,300	1,524	13.50	12,516	1,644	13.12	13.30	4,709	1,764	37.42	35.8
22	20,610	2,692	13.05	7,437	788	10.60	8,065	888	11.00	10.81	3,447	1,016	29.46	37.8
23	23,670	4,496	18.99	9,296	1,508	16.21	10,217	1,820	17.80	16.87	2,832	1,168	41.25	26.0
24	46,591	7,136	15.30	16,648	2,148	12.96	16,623	2,504	15.05	13.98	8,820	2,484	28.19	34.8
25	30,838	6,948	22.50	11,404	2,160	18.95	13,969	3,032	21.70	20.46	3,669	1,756	47.88	25.3
26	24,045	3,168	13.20	8,718	968	11.10	9,942	1,192	12.01	11.57	3,636	1,008	27.75	31.5
27	49,751	9,052	18.21	17,191	2,536	14.75	18,111	2,840	15.68	15.18	9,757	3,676	37.69	40.6
28	44,851	10,436	23.28	15,896	3,292	20.70	21,397	5,244	24.50	22.88	5,183	1,900	36.65	18.2
Total	703,043	115,456	16.42	264,190	34,894	13.20	271,839	40,040	14.72	.....	113,220	40,492	35.76	.....

STATISTICS OF COLORED READERS

Ward	TOTAL COLORED				ADULT COLORED						JUVENILE 5 TO 14 YEARS			
					MEN			WOMEN						
	Population	% Total Ward Population	Regist.	% Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Reg.	Population	Regist.	% Reg.	Juvenile Proportion of Total Regist.
1	520	2.09	16	3.07	208	12	5.76	188	4	2.12	80	.....	.....	.....
2	175	0.86	2	1.14	67	.....	.....	69	.....	.....	27	8	29.6	.....
3	245	1.21	32	13.08	105	.....	.....	85	16	18.84	43	16	37.2	.....
4	3,741	13.23	512	13.69*	1,488	88	5.91	1,380	108	7.82	563	316	56.10	61.71
5	4.708	24.40	432	9.18*	2,154	96	4.45	1,893	84	4.51	505	252	49.95	58.33
6	7,065	46.44	600	7.89*	3,592	136	3.78	2,942	212	7.21	870	232	26.95	41.65
7	1,742	10.11	156	8.95*	677	32	4.72	663	24	3.62	273	100	36.65	64.1
8	451	2.18	132	29.25	194	24	.....	163	52	31.90	64	56	87.5	.....
9	38	0.17	4	10.52	18	4	.....	12	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....
10	22	0.11	.....	.....	9	.....	.....	11	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	.....
11	139	0.48	6	4.30	98	.....	.....	28	.....	.....	10	6	.....	.....
12	788	2.55	156	19.80	294	20	6.80	292	56	19.18	155	80	51.55	.....
13	82	0.17	16	19.52	39	8	.....	24	8	33.3	15	.....	.....	.....
14	61	0.24	32	52.42	24	8	.....	27	24	88.9	6	.....	.....	.....
15	1,211	5.34	112	9.25*	451	12	2.66	412	36	8.75	231	64	27.70	57.14
16	9,412	43.58	740	7.85*	3,676	172	4.67	5,538	232	4.20	1,528	336	22.00	45.40
17	13,308	52.41	1,024	7.65*	6,205	320	5.10	5,472	364	6.65	1,174	340	28.95	33.20
18	501	2.40	60	11.98	193	8	.....	199	8	4.02	71	44	62.10	.....
19	5,513	11.09	396	7.18*	2,145	112	5.22	2,284	108	4.73	727	176	24.2	44.4
20	1,898	7.72	160	8.44*	783	40	5.10	760	68	8.95	246	52	21.12	32.5
21	263	0.85	12	4.56	99	8	.....	96	.....	.....	46	4	8.70	.....
22	5,542	21.18	892	16.09*	1,957	212	10.83	2,196	412	18.78	1,223	268	21.9	30.04
23	4,977	17.37	676	13.58*	1,974	200	10.13	2,054	316	15.38	661	160	24.2	23.66
24	600	1.27	44	7.33	212	8	3.77	218	12	5.51	118	24	20.32	.....
25	2,097	6.36	264	12.59*	832	72	8.49	917	136	14.85	215	56	26.05	21.21
26	2,982	11.03	368	12.33*	989	84	8.50	1,160	192	16.55	550	92	16.72	25.00
27	289	0.58	32	11.08	113	8	.....	104	8	7.69	44	16	36.5	.....
28	794	1.74	28	3.53	311	4	1.28	423	16	3.78	41	8	19.5	.....
Total	69,854	9.04	6,904	9.88	28,987	1,688	5.82	29,579	2,496	8.43	9,491	2,726	28.72	.....

*Wards 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17 19, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 26 only are considered in the text as being representative colored districts.

"Books should be treated like men. Choose the most reasonable, examine them, and never give up your judgment except to evidence."

—*Voltaire.*

22818

END OF
TITLE